

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:241

ANSWERED ON:23.02.2011

GRANTING OVERSEAS CITIZEN OF INDIA STATUS

Chavan Shri Harischandra Deoram

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Union Government has decided to grant Overseas citizen of India status to Indians turned `Naturalized American Citizen` with right to function from either country;
- (b) if so, the salient features thereof;
- (c) whether this status with voting rights would be extended to Indian Citizens in other countries;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (e) whether the Government has surveyed the demand and utility of these citizens seeking the said status; and
- (f) if so, the time by which the said status is likely to be granted?

Answer

MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI)

- (a) The Government of India does not accord dual-citizenship. However Government of India issues Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cards to eligible Persons of Indian Origin residing in various countries, which includes persons of Indian origin who have acquired American citizenship.
- (b) Salient features are given in Annexure 'A'
- (c) Government has issued Gazette Notification giving voting rights to Non-Resident Indian i.e. Indian citizens/Indian Passport holders residing in other countries.
- (d) Citizens of India who have not acquired the citizenship of any other country and are living abroad owing to employment education or otherwise, are now eligible to register their names in the electoral rolls in the constituency of the address shown in their passport and to vote when they are present at the time polls are held.
- (e) & (f) The scheme of OCI cards is already functional for persons of Indian origin.

ANNEXURE 'A' REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (B) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 241 FOR ANSWER ON 23.02.2011

REGARDING 'GRANTING OVERSEAS CITIZEN OF INDIA STATUS'

(b) Details and Salient Features of the OCI Scheme are as follows:

- # The Scheme provides for registration of Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) who were citizens of India on or after 26th January, 1950 or were eligible to become citizens of India on 26th January, 1950 and who are citizens of other countries, except Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- # The Scheme was introduced by an amendment of the Citizenship Act, 1955 in August 2005 and was made operational from January, 2006.
- # Registered OCIs are issued an OCI registration certificate and a life-long multiple entry, multi purpose visa for visiting India.
- # Registered OCIs are exempted from registration with Foreigners Regional Registration Office for any length of stay in India.
- # Registered OCIs are granted conceptual parity with Non-Resident Indians in respect of all facilities available to them in economic, financial and educational fields except in matters relating to the acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties'. However, specific benefits have to be notified under section 7B(1) of the Act.
- # OCI is not to be construed as 'dual citizenship'.